

## Church News

### Holsingerisms, No 19

I scarcely know where to begin. I have so much to say and I'm so far behind with my reviews; but I must have a few words by way of revision. In the first place, two of my co-laborers in the ministry have passed over to "The great majority" since my last, with whom I was quite intimately acquainted, namely: brethren John P. Wolfe and George Neff, both charter members of the Brethren church; that is they were with us from the beginning. Brother Wolfe was a descendent of what were once called "The Far Western Brethren," and never knew anything else but the present practice of the church, so far as keeping the ordinances is concerned at least. I had intended to make some extended notice of the life and labor of Brother Wolfe, but Brother Shively did that work quite well in No. 19 current volume. I know of no improvement that could have been made to his notice except that I had hoped it would be accompanied by a portrait of Brother Wolfe. Owing to the delay of this notice I will defer further particulars and the portrait to "my contemporaries" department of my autobiography.

Brother George Neff belonged to the Congregational Brethren before our present organization, but participated in all the preliminary conferences, from "School House No. 7" to the Dayton convention. He was liberal in his views and with his means, and faithful in the discharge of his duties, according to his abilities. I hope that some of his colleagues in Northern Indiana will have published a suitable biographical sketch of Brother Neff. Now is the time to gather data for such a paper.

Then I want to notice an item in No. 16, by brother H. M. Oberholtzer, of which I quote the following: "With the exception of the grief and mortification that my own failures brought upon me, my first pastorate was very pleasant. Perhaps the most lamentable fact is, that I was unable to lead one sinner to repent. I had not even one convert. I am ashamed and sorrowful." I am not personally acquainted with Brother Oberholtzer, but I observe that our first experience in preaching is very similar. I had the same trouble to contend with, and was wonderfully tempted to quit. In addition to my own troubles I had in my employ at the time a Baptist minister who shared his temptations with me. I remember very distinctly a colloquy which followed one of our commiserations, when he said: "Holsinger, let's quit; our preaching is doing no good at any rate. People go away from our service as if nothing had been said. What is the use in spending our time for nothing; we had better do something for ourselves and our families." After a little reflection I gave him the following reply: "All right, Mr. Holmes; you run a saloon, and I'll start a billiard room and a ———, and we'll have a fine time and make lots of money." That put him to thinking, and brought this response: "Well, I do say

you beat all I ever heard for running things to extremes, but taking that view of the case it would make matters worse. We are doing some good if we only keep ourselves in the right, and if our influence would lead men into wrong if we were to do wrong—of which I have no doubt—who knows but that our weak effort to do right may be leading some one in the good way we are trying to point out." And so if I hold out faithful to the end, I will be sure of saving at least *one* soul by preaching the gospel, and one for whom I could have had no assurance if I had not preached. And that one soul is worth more to me than the whole world. And so from that time on I did my best in preaching the word and left the results with the Lord, from whom after all the increase must come, even if the preaching should be done with greater ability and eloquence; and I found a reasonable degree of satisfaction from my service. Whenever I could receive liberty or freedom of utterance while preaching, I enjoyed the work, as I regarded that feeling as a greater assurance of God's presence and approbation than converts, for I have known converts to have come out after sermons which had neither Christ nor Christianity in them, nothing but the preacher—through him, by him and to him they were converted. One assurance only is requisite in successful preaching, "Preach the word."

And that reminds me that I wanted to compliment and emphasize, if I could possibly do so, an article in the same number on the subject of "The Christian Ministry," by brother J. Allen Miller, and one in No. 15 by brother Louis Gillin, entitled "The Gospel Preacher," and a paper headed, "The Emotional in Religion," by brother Louis Bauman. I was very much pleased with the sentiments of said articles, as they are in evident accord with the teachings of the gospel of Christ. It does me much good to read such able expositions of God's word by our young ministers upon whose shoulders even now rests the burden of the work of the Brethren church. Other articles and authors deserve special recognition, and should be reviewed, and might be re read to profit.

Brother Beer's article on "The Kiss and the Covering" in No. 19, should be carefully read by all, and especially by all our ministers. It is to be feared that we are growing indifferent in regard to the careful observance of what many are pleased to call the "small things" of the gospel, and like Corah, some are crying out: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." Let us be careful that we get not above the things that are written in the book. A kiss is a token of love, and as such the holy apostles would have us observe it, not merely because they *said so*, but because we feel so. Kissing is a pleasure when one—no when two—want to kiss, and it is a severe punishment when they do not. Now it is the "wanting to" that we need to cultivate; and then the observance will come all right. Brethren, this is a severe criticism, I see it

now, but I can't take it back, for I feel it is true. We do not love as we should; when we do there will be more gospel kissing. I have no trouble with those who really love me; they are neither afraid nor ashamed to kiss me at any suitable opportunity. And let it be understood once for all, that that is our privilege according to the gospel and the rules of the Brethren church, or I am no authority.

H. R. HOLSINGER.

### Elgin, Calif.

I just returned Monday from Vernalis this state where I was called by the brethren to conduct some meetings. This was my second visit both of which I enjoyed very much. Congregations were small owing to the fact that because of the crop failure in this section many have gone elsewhere to find employment. What they lacked in numbers was made up in large degree, at least by quality.

Saturday evening we very much enjoyed a visit at brother Richard Brown's with brother Martin Shively and wife. They have both greatly endeared themselves to the Brethren church in California by their earnestness in trying to save souls and by their kindness to all.

Here at Vernalis is the home of our much-loved Brother and Sister Beer. Having to wait till evening for a train, we enjoyed an all day visit with them. The time was pleasantly and profitably spent in conversation, reading aloud and singing. It seems to be a part of their very life to engage in church and Sunday-school work.

By labor and sacrifice the members here have built a neat church of which they may feel proud considering the disadvantages under which they labor. By prayer, by earnest Christian work, and by exemplary living on the part of members, we believe a good live congregation may be built up.

Brethren and sisters, let us exemplify the desire of Paul when he wrote the Colossians "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Col. 1:10.

ALBERT P. REED.

## Literary Notes

"The Moral and Religious Conditions of Spain" is the subject of an interesting illustrated article by Charles E. Faithful, of Madrid, in the August number of *The Missionary Review of the World*. Dr. Pierson, the Editor-in-Chief, opens the number with an account of the "Systematic Christian Work Among the Soldiers of various lands—a work of especial interest at the present time. Many will also be attracted by Dr. Robert A. Hume's able discussion of the causes and cure of the native "Dissatisfaction with British Rule in India" and consequent responsibility of American Christians. Dr. Hume has for many years been a careful student of men and events in British India, and his views are well worthy of consideration.

Other articles worthy of note in this issue of the *Review* are: "The World-wide Decline of Roman Catholicism," "Cuba and Its People," "Christianity versus Heathenism in Africa," and "The Meeting of the International Missionary Union." A new and valuable feature is added to the International Department in the form of "Answers to Correspond-